



# The California Master Plan for Education

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## The Cost of Implementing the Master Plan for Education

Frequently asked questions and answers

**Q. Isn't the Master Plan, as some critics charge, a well-intentioned, intelligent plan -- but ultimately unrealistic given the economic circumstances of the state?**

**A.** Not at all. The Master Plan was drafted to provide a clear description of the educational system California should strive to achieve over the next 20 years. It avoids prescribing a singular means to achieving these ends, allowing for different cost profiles attached to different approaches.

Taxpayers spent \$65 billion on public kindergarten through university education in California last year. The Master Plan provides the necessary management authority and accountability for effective and efficient annual spending of so much money on a goal as vital as education. Taxpayers deserve this accountability. Cost savings and determining the actual costs of the various elements of education are two major goals of the Plan. Master Plan recommendations that are ultimately determined to require additional funding will be accompanied by suggestions of methods for bringing that additional funding into the system.

**Q. Why are there no cost estimates attached to this plan?**

**A.** The system is currently administered in a way that makes it nearly impossible to determine how much money is spent on anything specific; this point actually underscores the dire need for the Master Plan. There are no common understandings about the extent to which the state is providing adequate support for the education system we desire. (For example, we recommend attaching an example or two here to make it more real). Hence, the Master Plan has called for a commission of experts to develop a Quality Education Model that defines concisely the range of funding needed to achieve quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students throughout the state. Cost estimates for public education will then be based on the adopted financing model.

There is no question that California's continued population growth will fuel the need for increased investment in education. How much additional investment is needed to ensure that all students receive a quality education experience is dependent on successfully assembling and analyzing data on the adequacy of teaching and learning opportunities throughout the state.

**Q. Won't universal preschool take needed resources away from K-12 students?**

**A.** Establishing universal preschool will require not just additional public investment; incentives for continued and expanded private participation are also recommended. The Master Plan will phase in access to publicly supported preschool beginning with communities that have low performing schools. There is the expectation that increased participation in preschool

activities will better prepare young children from all backgrounds to benefit fully from their public education. This additional investment is also expected to reduce subsequent expenditure requirements in other areas, such as disciplinary matters and support services for students with special needs, due to earlier diagnosis and intervention. It is an investment that pays off in the longer term.

**Q. Some say the governance legislation will not reduce costs at all. In fact, won't it likely prove to be a waste of money?**

**A.** The Master Plan legislation addressing governance would align oversight responsibilities and authority among state, regional/county, and local entities and between the governor's office and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. While there are no guarantees, this realignment should prompt a more streamlined administrative structure resulting in operational cost savings.